

News

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AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES IN OKLAHOMA: SECOND QUARTER 2005 **State wage level and over-the-year wage growth rank near the bottom nationally**

In the second quarter of 2005, weekly wages averaged \$673 in Tulsa County and \$644 in Oklahoma County, the State's only two counties with 75,000 or more jobs. Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that the weekly wage levels in both of Oklahoma's large counties were above the statewide wage of \$594, but below the national average of \$751. (See table A.)

Tulsa County recorded wage growth of 3.7 percent from the second quarter of 2004 to the second quarter of 2005. This was slightly lower than the national increase of 3.9 percent, but well above the statewide gain of 2.8 percent. Wage growth in Oklahoma County, at 1.1 percent, lagged both the State and national rates.

Table A. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and the 2 largest counties in Oklahoma, second quarter 2005(2)

Area	Employment	Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	June 2005 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (4)	Percent change, second quarter 2004-05 (5)	National ranking by percent change (4)
United States (6).....	132,808.3	\$751	--	3.9	--
Oklahoma.....	1,465.3	594	45	2.8	46
Oklahoma, Okla.....	411.5	644	246	1.1	297
Tulsa, Okla.....	330.9	673	209	3.7	153

(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

(2) Data are preliminary.

(3) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(4) Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

(5) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(6) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Average Weekly Wages in Oklahoma, Second Quarter 2005 (continued)

Wage levels

Of the 322 large counties across the country, over one-third registered weekly wages above the U.S. average. The weekly wage in Tulsa County, at \$673, was more than 10 percent below the national average and, as a result, ranked 209th among the large counties. The wage level in Oklahoma County averaged \$644 per week, 14 percent lower than that for the U.S., and ranked 246th in the nation. (See table A.)

Among the 322 largest counties in the nation, New York County, N.Y., recorded the highest average weekly wage at \$1,350. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,316, followed by San Mateo, Calif. (\$1,267), and Arlington, Va. (\$1,257). Three of the 10 counties with the highest wages in the U.S. were located in the greater New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y., Fairfield, Conn., and Somerset, N.J.), 3 others were located in or around the San Francisco area (Santa Clara, San Francisco, and San Mateo, all in California), while 3 more were located in or around the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area (Arlington, Va., Fairfax, Va., and Washington, D.C.). Rounding out the top 10 was Suffolk County, Mass., part of the Boston metropolitan area.

At the other end of the wage scale, the lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron, Texas (\$463), followed by Hidalgo, Texas (\$473), Horry, S.C. (\$499), Yakima, Wash. (\$509), and Tulare, Calif. (\$532). The wage level in each of the five lowest-ranked counties was less than 40 percent of the wage level reported for the highest-ranked county in the nation, New York.

On a statewide level, Oklahoma average weekly wages were 21 percent below the national average in the second quarter of 2005. The State's \$594 wage level ranked 45th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Oklahoma's weekly wage was close to that of neighboring Arkansas (\$592, 46th), but well above wages in the Plains states of North Dakota (\$561, 48th) and South Dakota (\$543, 51st). However, wages in Oklahoma were notably below those in the bordering states of Texas (\$738, 17th) and Kansas (\$636, 35th). (See table 1.)

Among the fifty states and the District of Columbia, only one reported wage levels greater than \$1,000 per week. At \$1,236, weekly wages in the District of Columbia were well above the national average of \$751. Four additional states recorded averages at least 20 percent above the U.S. level: Connecticut (\$946), Massachusetts (\$916), New York (\$913), and New Jersey (\$901). At the other end of the scale, four states reported wages 75 percent or less of the national average: South Dakota (\$543), Montana (\$553), Mississippi (\$556), and North Dakota (\$561).

Over-the-year wage changes

Tulsa County's 3.7-percent over-the-year wage increase in the second quarter of 2005 was sufficiently close to the national average to place it near the midpoint in the standings (153rd) among the 322 large counties nationwide. In contrast to Tulsa County, the 1.1-percent wage growth in Oklahoma County ranked 297th, placing it near the bottom in the national rankings. It should be noted that more than half (174) of the large counties in the U.S. recorded over-the-year wage increases below the 3.9-percent growth for the nation.

Average Weekly Wages in Oklahoma, Second Quarter 2005 (continued)

Leading the nation in average weekly wage growth was Webb, Texas, with an increase of 11.3 percent. San Mateo, Calif., was second with 10.6-percent growth, followed by the counties of Clark, Nev. (9.4 percent), Collier, Fla. (8.4 percent), Fairfax, Va. (8.1 percent), and Rockingham, N.H. (7.6 percent). Six counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. Pierce, Wash., had the largest decrease, -7.9 percent, followed by the counties of Clayton, Ga. (-6.3 percent), Rock Island, Ill. (-2.9 percent), Spartanburg, S.C. (-2.3 percent), Trumbull, Ohio (-1.3 percent), and San Luis Obispo, Calif. (-0.2 percent).

At the state level, average weekly wages in Oklahoma rose 2.8 percent from the second quarter of 2004 to the second quarter of 2005, the 5th lowest wage increase among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Indiana also had a 2.8-percent wage gain and, as a result, the same ranking. The four states with smaller percentage changes over the same period were Oregon (2.5 percent), Minnesota (2.3 percent), Massachusetts (2.1 percent), and Vermont (1.6 percent). Nevada led the U.S. in over-the-year wage growth at 7.7 percent. Virginia, at 5.5 percent, was next in line followed by Florida and New Hampshire, both at 5.2 percent, and Wyoming, at 5.1 percent. No state reported a decline in average weekly wages. (See table 1.)

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from reports submitted by employers subject to unemployment insurance (UI) laws. The 8.6 million employer reports cover 132.8 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly wage is computed by dividing the quarterly total wages of employees covered by UI programs by the average monthly number of these employees. This number then is divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or States for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas, counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Note below) and will not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

Additional statistics and other information

An annual bulletin, *Employment and Wages*, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2004 edition of this bulletin contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the fourth quarter 2004 version of this news release. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2004* is available for sale from the United States Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250, telephone 866-512-1800, outside of Washington, D.C. Within Washington, D.C., the telephone number is 202-512-1800. The fax number is 202-512-2104. The 2004 bulletin is available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn04.htm>. Also, QCEW news releases issued by regional offices have been placed at one convenient Web site location, <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewregional.htm>. Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

Average Weekly Wages in Oklahoma, Second Quarter 2005 (continued)

For personal assistance or further information on the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the Dallas Information Office at 214-767-6970 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. CT. This release is available in text and PDF format on the Dallas BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/ro6/home.htm> . Users may also obtain the release from the Bureau's fax-on-demand service in Dallas by dialing 214-767-9613 and requesting document number 9559.

NOTE

QCEW data are the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. For this reason, county and industry data are not designed to be used as a time series.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. The potential differences result from several causes. Differences between BLS and State published data may be due to the continuing receipt, review, and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

Table 1. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, second quarter 2005(2)

State	Employment	Average weekly wage (3)			
	June 2005 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2004-05	National ranking by percent change
United States (4).....	132,808.3	\$751	-	3.9	-
Alabama.....	1,900.6	644	33	3.9	24
Alaska.....	315.1	759	15	3.3	39
Arizona.....	2,429.7	723	20	4.3	11
Arkansas.....	1,158.2	592	46	4.2	13
California.....	15,387.2	849	6	3.5	30
Colorado.....	2,215.9	769	11	3.4	31
Connecticut.....	1,676.5	946	2	4.3	11
Delaware.....	421.3	797	9	3.1	42
District of Columbia.....	675.1	1,236	1	4.1	15
Florida.....	7,656.1	689	24	5.2	3
Georgia.....	3,937.6	722	21	3.1	42
Hawaii.....	605.9	678	26	4.0	23
Idaho.....	628.5	574	47	3.4	31
Illinois.....	5,816.8	803	8	4.2	13
Indiana.....	2,889.9	664	30	2.8	46
Iowa.....	1,475.0	614	41	3.9	24
Kansas.....	1,323.6	636	35	4.6	7
Kentucky.....	1,772.9	651	32	3.8	27
Louisiana.....	1,909.2	616	39	4.1	15
Maine.....	610.7	609	43	3.7	29
Maryland.....	2,527.3	818	7	4.1	15
Massachusetts.....	3,219.6	916	3	2.1	50
Michigan.....	4,366.7	768	12	3.4	31
Minnesota.....	2,664.7	760	14	2.3	49
Mississippi.....	1,117.3	556	49	4.1	15
Missouri.....	2,702.2	678	26	4.1	15
Montana.....	424.9	553	50	4.7	6
Nebraska.....	905.4	598	44	3.3	39
Nevada.....	1,220.7	738	17	7.7	1
New Hampshire.....	631.7	754	16	5.2	3
New Jersey.....	4,012.7	901	5	3.4	31
New Mexico.....	784.8	624	36	4.5	8
New York.....	8,471.1	913	4	4.1	15
North Carolina.....	3,855.7	665	29	4.1	15
North Dakota.....	333.2	561	48	4.1	15
Ohio.....	5,376.0	693	23	3.1	42
Oklahoma.....	1,465.3	594	45	2.8	46
Oregon.....	1,683.2	687	25	2.5	48
Pennsylvania.....	5,620.2	737	19	3.8	27
Rhode Island.....	487.7	720	22	3.4	31
South Carolina.....	1,823.5	621	38	4.4	10
South Dakota.....	387.4	543	51	3.4	31
Tennessee.....	2,695.7	670	28	3.4	31
Texas.....	9,592.4	738	17	4.5	8
Utah.....	1,120.9	622	37	3.2	41
Vermont.....	304.1	644	33	1.6	51
Virginia.....	3,618.9	787	10	5.5	2
Washington.....	2,825.2	761	13	3.4	31
West Virginia.....	703.0	612	42	3.9	24
Wisconsin.....	2,794.2	663	31	3.1	42
Wyoming.....	267.0	616	39	5.1	5
Puerto Rico.....	1,039.3	418	(5)	2.7	(5)
Virgin Islands.....	44.3	639	(5)	3.7	(5)

(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

(2) Data are preliminary.

(3) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(5) Data not included in the national ranking.